



# **Race, Justice, and the Gospel**

A Stonegate Workshop

# Table of Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Introduction .....                                 | 3  |
| A Biblical Understanding of Race and Justice ..... | 4  |
| Defining Race .....                                | 4  |
| Value and Diversity.....                           | 4  |
| What is Racism?.....                               | 5  |
| Institutional (Systemic) Injustice.....            | 6  |
| Justice in the Bible.....                          | 7  |
| What Does Justice Mean? .....                      | 7  |
| What Did Jesus Say About Justice? .....            | 8  |
| Summary: What is Justice?.....                     | 9  |
| What Does Justice Require?.....                    | 9  |
| <br>   |    |
| Race Relations in the Church Today.....            | 10 |
| What's Your Response?   Part 1.....                | 11 |
| What's Your Response?   Part 2.....                | 12 |
| A Balanced Approach.....                           | 13 |
| A Nuanced Approach.....                            | 14 |
| The Authority of Scripture.....                    | 16 |
| A Modern Alternative.....                          | 20 |
| Don't Get Distracted .....                         | 22 |
| <br>   |    |
| Some (Very General) Practical Steps .....          | 23 |
| Gospel Unity   Elvie Brown.....                    | 24 |
| Recommended Resources .....                        | 28 |

## **Why Teach on this Subject?**

- Because there is a great need for Biblical clarity
- Because this issue has become so politicized
- Because the church should have a better answer than the world
- Because we have the best resources for dealing with this issue

## **Our Goals**

- To provide Biblical clarity and context
- To provide Biblical exhortation and encouragement
- To provide an opportunity for further study and engagement

## **Before We Begin**

- We recognize the emotional tension this subject creates
- We want to be very sensitive, but also very honest about what we believe the Scriptures teach
- We are still learning; let's be charitable with each other
- We are being proactive about this on the practical level.

## A. A Biblical Understanding of Race & Justice

### 1. Defining Race<sup>1</sup>

- **Biologically:** There is one race: the *human* race. However, there are many ethnicities (aka: “the nations”).

*The Lord looks down from heaven on the human race to see if there is one who is wise, one who seeks God. — Psalm 14:2 (12:1, 8; 21:10; Deut. 32:8; Rev. 9:15, 18)*

*From one man he has made every **nationality** to live over the whole earth and has determined their appointed times and the boundaries of where they live. — Acts 17:26 (Gen. 12:1–3; Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:5; 7:45; 10:35; 14:16)*

- **Ethnically:** Sometimes, different ethnicities are called unique races

*Brothers and sisters, children of Abraham’s **race**, and those among you who fear God, it is to us that the word of this salvation has been sent. — Acts 13:26 (cf. Acts 7:19; Romans 9:5 ESV)*

- **Spiritually:** Every Christian is part of a new race in Christ

*But you are “**a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his possession,**” so that you may proclaim the praises of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. <sup>10</sup>Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. — 1 Peter 2:9*

### 2. Value & Diversity

- Every person is an image-bearer of God with *equal* dignity, value, and worth

*So God created man in his own image; he created him in the image of God; he created them male and female. — Genesis 1:27 (cf. Psalm 8:3–8; Psalm 139:13–16)*

- Scripture doesn’t articulate a color-blind world; it acknowledges *ethnic* distinctions.
- God has a heart for diversity, because God has a heart for all people

*After this I looked, and there was a vast multitude from **every nation, tribe, people, and language**, which no one could number, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white robes with palm branches in their hands.— Revelation 7:9 (cf. Genesis 12:1–3; 15ff; Isaiah 19:16–25; Matthew 28:18–20; 1 Timothy 2:1–4; Revelation 5:9)*

---

<sup>1</sup> This three-part outline is adapted from Isaac Adams, “What Does the Bible Say About Race? And Why it Matters,” *United We Pray Podcast*, delivered August 24, 2019 at Central Union Baptist Church. Used with permission.

### 3. What is Racism?

- Ethnic *Pride*: believing your ethnic group to be superior to another.
- Ethnic *Partiality*: giving preferential treatment or applying different standards to your ethnic group over another.
- Ethnic *Hatred*: believing and/or acting with personal animus or indifference toward another ethnic group.
- **Some Passages to Study**: Leviticus 19:14–16; Deuteronomy 1:15–17; 16:18–19; Malachi 2:8–9; Luke 10:25–37; Acts 6:1–4; 10–11; Acts 15; Galatians 2–3; James 2:1–13.
- **Let's Be Honest**
  - Followers of Jesus have been *guilty* of this sin.
    - The apostle Peter (Galatians 2)
    - The Colonial Period
    - The Founding of the Southern Baptist Convention
    - The Civil War
    - The Jim-Crow South
  - Followers of Jesus can *still* be guilty of this today.
- Two Levels:
  - *Individual* racism: ethnic pride, partiality, or hatred expressed in individual attitudes and actions.
  - *Institutional* (or systemic) racism: ethnic pride, partiality, or hatred expressed in laws, policies, and systems.<sup>2</sup>

Can wicked rulers be allied with you, *those who frame injustice by statute*? — Psalm 94:20

Differing weights are detestable to the Lord, and dishonest scales are unfair. — Proverbs 23:20

Again, I observed all the acts of oppression being done under the sun. *Look at the tears of those who are oppressed*; they have no one to comfort them. *Power is with those who oppress them*; they have no one to comfort them....If you see oppression of the poor and perversion of justice and righteousness in the province, don't be astonished at the situation, because *one official protects another official, and higher officials protect them*. The profit from the land is taken by all; the king is served by the field. — — Ecclesiastes 4:1; 5:8

Woe to those *enacting crooked statutes and writing oppressive laws* to keep the poor from getting a fair trial and to *deprive the needy among my people of justice*, so that widows can be their spoil and they can plunder the fatherless. — Isaiah 10:1–2

#### **Examples of Institutional / Systemic Injustice in Scripture:**

- Israel's enslavement in Egypt (Exodus 1)
- Child sacrifice within pagan nations (Leviticus 18:21; Leviticus 20; Jeremiah 32:35)
- King Nebuchadnezzar commanding Israel to worship his statue (Daniel 3)

---

<sup>2</sup> For extensive documentation of this phenomena in 20th century American life, see Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law*.

## 4. Institutional (Systemic) Injustice

- When specific *laws* unjustly target/affect a group of people
  - Worship laws in Babylon (Daniel 3)
  - Jim Crow laws in post-civil war American South
  - Abortion laws in present days America
- When specific *institutions* unjustly target/affect a group of people
  - Chattel slavery in 17th–19th century America
  - Redlining in the 20th century<sup>3</sup>
  - Planned Parenthood
- We must be *specific* about this, otherwise we'll be boxing a ghost or crying wolf.

Don't you know that the runners in a stadium all race, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way to win the prize. Now everyone who competes exercises self-control in everything. They do it to receive a perishable crown, but we an imperishable crown. ***So I do not run like one who runs aimlessly or box like one beating the air.*** Instead, I discipline my body and bring it under strict control, so that after preaching to others, I myself will not be disqualified. — 1 Corinthians 9:24–27

For if you ***truly*** amend your ways and your deeds, if you ***truly execute justice*** one with another, if you do not oppress the sojourner, the fatherless, or the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not go after other gods to your own harm, then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave of old to your fathers forever. — Jeremiah 7:5–7 ESV

- The terms “institutional” or “systemic injustice” are often used to mean “pervasive” or “widespread” injustice. This can be very confusing, because it describes a cultural perception instead of a legal policy.

“If we infuse *systemic* and *injustice* with biblical meaning, then systemic injustice is any system that either requires or encourages those within the system to break the moral laws God revealed for his creatures flourishing...Systemic injustice is any system that requires or encourages us to defy the Creator by breaking his good commands....From [a non-Biblical] perspective, the way you spot systemic injustice is by looking for unequal outcomes. And unequal outcome becomes damning evidence that sexism, racism, or some other evil 'ism' is at the foundation of a system. The system, therefore, must be reduced to rubble for everyone to have a fair shot at the good life...The Bible is clear that discrimination exists and that Christians must resist it. Sinful discrimination indeed causes some disparities. But...shouting 'systemic injustice!' at every unequal outcome is too easy. *In a world, unlike ours, with zero racism or sexism or any other evil ism, there would still be vast inequalities based on things as boring and undamning as geography, age, birthdays, birth order, shopping habits, desire to lay bricks, and so much more.*” — Thaddeus Williams<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> “The term “redlining” comes from the development by the New Deal, by the federal government of maps of every metropolitan area in the country. And those maps were color-coded by first the Home Owners Loan Corp. and then the Federal Housing Administration and then adopted by the Veterans Administration, and these color codes were designed to indicate where it was safe to insure mortgages. And anywhere where African-Americans lived, anywhere where African-Americans lived nearby were colored red to indicate to appraisers that these neighborhoods were too risky to insure mortgages.” Terry Gross, “A ‘Forgotten History’ Of How The U.S. Government Segregated America,” *NPR*, May 3, 2017. Gross interviews Richard Rothstein about his book, *The Color of Law* which goes into great detail about this and related subjects.

<sup>4</sup> *Confronting Injustice Without Compromising Truth*, 79, 81, 84. William uses “Social Justice B” to refer to the non-biblical perspective. This is his term to encompass much of the worldview and approach utilized by proponents of Critical Theory.

## 5. Justice in the Bible

- Justice is a *major* theme in the Bible
- A Description of God's *Character*
- A Command of God's *People*

### A Description of God's Character

*For the Lord your God is the God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, mighty, and awe-inspiring God, **showing no partiality** and **taking no bribe**. He executes **justice** for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the resident alien, giving him food and clothing. — Deuteronomy 10:17–18*

***Righteousness** and **justice** are the foundation of your throne; faithful love and truth go before you. — Psalm 89:14*

### A Command of God's People

*Do not deny **justice** or **show partiality to anyone**. Do not accept a bribe, for it blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous. — Deuteronomy 16:19*

*He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to **do justice**, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? — Micah 6:8*

*But let **justice** flow like water, and righteousness, like an unfailing stream. — Amos 5:24*

## 6. What Does Justice Mean?

- **For God:**
  - Justice is the very character of God
  - He cannot cease to be perfectly just and righteous
- **For People**
  - God's character is the standard human justice.
  - True justice is that which conforms to God's character.

*“An unjust law is no law at all...A just law is a man-made code that squares with the moral law, or the law of God. An unjust law is a code out of harmony with the moral law [of God].” — Martin Luther King Jr.<sup>5</sup>*

---

<sup>5</sup> “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” April 16, 1963. See Full Letter Here: <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/letter-birmingham-jail>

## Two Hebrew Words

1. *Mishpat*: impartially giving people what they're due.
2. *Tzadeqah*: living in right relationship with God, others, and creation

## Two Aspects of Justice

1. *Mishpat* = *Rectifying* Justice: giving punishment, protection, and care.
  - Mostly directed toward people in a position of authority (Parents, Leaders, etc.)
  - Especially concerned with protecting the most *vulnerable*—i.e. the poor, the immigrant, the widow, and the orphan.
  - This didn't mean special *treatment* (aka: partiality), but it did mean special *attention*.
  - Operates in the context of *injustice* (crime, oppression, vulnerability, etc.)
2. *Tzadeqah* = *Relational* Justice: living in right relationship with one another.
  - Describes our *proactive* posture toward God, people, and creation.
  - Doesn't require a crime or injustice to be committed.
  - This justice makes the other justice (*mishpat*) unnecessary
  - Operates in the context of *everyday life*

"*Mishpat* in its various forms occurs more than 200 times in the Hebrew OT. It's most basic meaning is to treat people equitably... *Mishpat* means acquitting or punishing every person on the merits of the case, regardless of race or social status. Anyone who does the same wrong should be given the same penalty...It also means to give people their rights." — Tim Keller<sup>6</sup>

## 7. What Did Jesus Say About Justice?

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You pay a tenth of mint, dill, and cumin, and yet you have neglected **the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy, and faithfulness**. These things should have been done without neglecting the others. Blind guides! You strain out a gnat, but gulp down a camel! — Matthew 23:23–24

When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they came together. And one of them, an expert in the law, asked a question to test him: "Teacher, which command in the law is the greatest?" He said to him, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and most important command. The second is like it: **Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commands.**" — Matthew 22:34–40

---

<sup>6</sup>Generous Justice, 3.



## 8. What Does Justice Require?

- Justice Requires an *Objective Standard*
- Justice Requires *Truth*

“The Bible’s call to seek justice is not a call to superficial, knee-jerk activism [Prov. 19:2]. We aren’t commanded to execute justice, but to ‘truly execute justice.’ [Jer. 7:5]. That presupposes there are untrue ways to execute justice, ways of trying to make the world a better place that aren’t in sync with reality and end up unleashing more havoc on the universe.” — Thaddeus Williams<sup>7</sup>

The problem of injustice is a God-sized problem. If we don’t start with him first, whatever we’re seeking, it ain’t justice... Without truth, there can be no justice. And what is our ultimate standard of truth? It is not our feelings. It is not popular opinion. It is not what presidents or politicians say. God’s Word is the standard of truth. If we’re trying harder to align with the rising opinions of our day than with the Bible, then we ain’t doing real justice. — John Perkins<sup>8</sup>

“If our social justice advocacy isn’t rooted in [sound] doctrine and truth, then we’ll end up promoting things contrary to biblical teachings.” — Justin Giboney<sup>9</sup>

## 9. Summary: What is Justice?

- Equal *Dignity*: recognizing that every person—regardless of ethnicity, class, gender, etc.—is made in the image of God, deserving of respect, and treating them as such.
- Equal Application of the *Law*: treating every person—regardless of ethnicity, class, gender, etc.—the same under the law.
- Biblical Justice does not *necessarily* seek to accomplish equal *Outcomes*—in relationships, under the law, or in social situations.<sup>10</sup>
- Justice is living out the *10 Commandments* in everyday life.
- Justice is *Blind* with respect to race, class, gender, status, etc.

That every human being possessed an equal dignity was not remotely a self-evident truth [in the ancient world]. A Roman would have laughed at it. To campaign against discrimination on the grounds of gender or sexuality, however, was to depend on large numbers of people sharing in a common assumption: that everyone possessed an inherent worth. The origins of this principle . . . lay not in the French Revolution, nor in the Declaration of Independence, nor in the Enlightenment, but in the Bible. — Tom Holland<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup>*Confronting Injustice Without Compromising Truth*, 3.

<sup>8</sup> “Forward,” to Williams, *Confronting Injustice Without Compromising Truth*.

<sup>9</sup> *Compassion (&) Conviction: The AND Campaign’s Guide to Faithful Civic Engagement*, 49.

<sup>10</sup> See for example: Matthew 20:1–16; 25:14–30; Luke 12:41–48; Romans 12:3–8; 1 Corinthians 3:5–10; Galatians 6:1–5; Ephesians 5:25–31; 1 Tim. 2:8–3:13)

<sup>11</sup> *Dominion: How the Christian Revolution Remade the World*, quoted by Rebecca McLaughlin, “Jesus Changed Everything for Women,” *The Gospel Coalition*, March 22, 2021.

## B. Race Relations in the Church Today

- Racism is still a *real* issue in society today.
- The Church is incredibly *segregated* (by and large)<sup>12</sup>
- For many, there is a deep apprehension, fear, and mistrust around issues of race—even in the church.
- By and large, there seems to be a massive gap of *perception* and *experience* between white & non-white Christians.

*Sister, I'm going to tell you how I'm doing. And as I tell you, please understand that I'm incapable of completing this message without weeping. There's a part of me that's saying, "Spare yourself the pain, Shai. It's not worth it." But I'm choosing not to listen to that part of me because I would be robbing you of an opportunity to "bear one another's burdens" and "mourn with those who mourn"—and I'm sure, as a sister in Christ, you want to do just that.*

*This is about how being a black man in America has shaped both the way I see myself and the way others have seen me my whole life. It's about being told to leave the sneaker store as a 12-year-old, because I was taking too long to decide which sneakers I wanted to buy with my birthday money and the white saleswoman assumed I was in the store to steal something.*

*It's about having what feels like genuine fellowship with my white brothers and sisters who share the same Reformed theology—until I mention racism, injustice, or police brutality, at which point I'm looked at skeptically as if I embrace a "social gospel" or am some kind of "liberal" or "social justice warrior."*

*And it's about sometimes feeling like some of my white friends aren't that particularly interested in truly knowing me—at least not in any meaningful way that might actually challenge their preconceptions. Rather, it feels like they use me to feel better about themselves because I check off the "black friend" box. Much more could be mentioned. These were the first things that came to mind.*

*So when I watch a video like George Floyd's, it represents for me the fresh reopening of a deep wound and the reliving of layers of trauma that get exponentially compounded each time a well-meaning white friend says, "All lives matter." Of course they do, but in this country, black lives have been treated like they don't matter for centuries and present inequities in criminal justice, income, housing, health care, education, etc. show that all lives don't actually matter like they should.—Shai Linne<sup>13</sup>*

---

<sup>12</sup> See the work by Smith and Emerson, *Dividing By Faith* for sociological look at this as of 1995.

<sup>13</sup> Read the whole article at Shai Linne, "George Floyd and Me," *The Gospel Coalition*, June 8, 2020. For a gracious, but critical response to Shai Linne from another Christian, see A.D. Robles, "Shai Linne, George Floyd, and Me," *YouTube*, June 8, 2020.

## 1. What's Your Response? | Some Unhelpful and Unfaithful Options

- **Impulsive Name Calling: “Marxist, Liberal, SJW, etc.”**

A gentle answer turns away anger, but *a harsh word stirs up wrath*. The tongue of the wise makes knowledge attractive, but *the mouth of fools blurts out foolishness*. — Proverbs 15:1–2

But I tell you, everyone who is angry with his brother or sister will be subject to judgment. *Whoever insults his brother or sister, will be subject to the court. Whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be subject to hellfire*. — Matthew 5:22

With the tongue we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in God’s likeness. Blessing and cursing come out of the same mouth. *My brothers and sisters, these things should not be this way*. — James 3:9–10

- **Assuming the Worst**

Therefore, whatever you want others to do for you, *do also the same for them*, for this is the Law and the Prophets. — Matthew 7:12

Love finds no joy in unrighteousness but rejoices in the truth. It *bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things*. — 1 Corinthians 13:4–7

- **Getting Defensive**

A person’s insight gives him patience, and his virtue is to *overlook an offense*. — Proverbs 19:11

“Love....is *not irritable*.” — 1 Corinthians 13:5

Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be *quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry*. *Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires*. — James 1:19–20 NLT

- **Picking Political Tribes over Christian Unity**

Therefore I, the prisoner in the Lord, urge you to walk worthy of the calling you have received, with all *humility and gentleness*, with patience, bearing with one another in love, *making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace*. — Ephesians 4:1–3

Just one thing: As *citizens of heaven*, live your lives worthy of the gospel of Christ...Do nothing out of *selfish ambition* or conceit, but in *humility* consider others as *more important than yourselves*. Everyone should look not to his own interests, but *rather to the interests of others*. — Philippians 1:27, 2:3–4

- **Quoting Statistics: it’s just not the right time.**

A fool does not delight in understanding, but only wants to show off his opinions. — Proverbs 18:2

A word spoken *at the right time* is like gold apples in silver settings. — Proverbs 25:11

*Love one another deeply as brothers and sisters*. Take the lead in *honoring* one another... *Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep*. — Romans 12:10, 15

## 2. What's Your Response? | Some Basic Truths

- As Christians, we *must* respond *differently* than the world (John 13:34–35; 1 John 4:7–21)
- You don't have to *agree*, but we are commanded to *listen* and to *love*

Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires. — James 1:19–20

Love one another deeply as brothers and sisters. Take the lead in honoring one another... Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep. — Romans 12:10, 15

Do you see someone who speak to soon? There is more hope for a fool than for him. — Proverbs 29:20

- People connect with those who identify with their *fears* and who sympathize with their *sympathize* — is this true of us?

“One essential aspect of this process is the skill of *active listening*. Without this, we have no chance of success in learning how to communicate with each other...Active listening is listening for understanding, rather than for argument. Often when discussing controversial issues, we only listen so as to make a counter-argument. There is, of course, a time and place for that. But we need to overcome our instinctive tribalism if we want to work toward win-win solutions. Active listening foregrounds empathy, rather than argument.” — George Yancey<sup>14</sup>

Pastor Tim Keller once said that ‘love without truth is sentimentality (overly emotional and lacking substance) and truth without love is harshness.’ We can know the Bible front to back and be adept in our understanding of systematic theology, but if we don't love our neighbors, we're not being Christlike. If we use doctrine to correct people but don't show them love and compassion, not only will we be ineffective but more importantly we'll fail to follow Christ's example. The apostle Paul says, “If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing” (1 Corinthians 13:1). — Justin Giboney<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> “Not White Fragility—Mutual Responsibility: A Review of ‘White Fragility’ by Robin DiAngelo,” *The Gospel Coalition*, June 27, 2020

<sup>15</sup> *Compassion and Conviction*, 48.

### 3. A Balanced Approach

- We must hold biblical compassion and biblical truth *together*
- We must *identify* with people, without becoming *totally* identified with them<sup>16</sup>

If struggle is being down in a hole, empathy is not jumping into the hole with someone who is struggling and taking on their emotions, or owning their struggle as yours to fix. If their issues become yours, now you have two people stuck in a hole. Not helpful. Boundaries are important here. We have to know where we end and others begin if we really want to show up with empathy. — Brene Brown<sup>17</sup>

- We must focus not only on people's *feelings*, but also on their *good*

Therefore, as God's chosen ones... put on **compassion**, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience...*Let the word of Christ dwell richly among you*, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another... — Colossians 3:12–17 (cf. Matt. 9:36; Luke 10:33; 1 Peter 3:8; 1 John 3:16–18) .

- We must be willing to *listen* and to *question*

See to it that no one repays evil for evil to anyone, but always **pursue what is good for one another** and for all...**test all things. Hold on to what is good.** Stay away from **every kind of evil.** — 1 Thessalonians 5:15–22

The one who follows instruction is on the path to life, but the one who rejects **correction** goes astray. — Proverbs 10:17

Whoever loves discipline **loves knowledge**, but one who hates **correction** is stupid. — Proverbs 12:1

Anyone who ignores discipline despises himself, but whoever **listens to correction** acquires good sense.— Proverbs 15:32

A fool does not **delight in understanding**, but only wants to **show off his opinions.** — Proverbs 18:2

The first to state his case seems right until another comes and **cross-examines** him. — Proverbs 18:17

- We must be willing to identify structural *and* personal factors<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> See Joe Rigney, "Do You Feel My Pain? Empathy, Sympathy, and Dangerous Virtues," *DesiringGod*, May 2, 2020.

<sup>17</sup>*Dare to Lead*, 142

<sup>18</sup> As this relates to the subject of policing see the extensive studies by Roland Fryer, "An Empirical Analysis of Racial Differences in Police Use of Force," *Journal of Political Economy*. Harvard University, 2016 available at <https://scholar.harvard.edu/fryer/publications/empirical-analysis-racial-differences-police-use-force>. See also the recently released report by the United Nations, "Report of the International Commission of Inquiry on Systemic Racist Police Violence Against People of African Descent in the United States," March 2021, available at <https://www.theskimm.com/archive/2021-04-28>. See also Walter Williams, *Race and Economics* and Heather McDonald, *The War on Cops*.

## 4. A Nuanced Approach

- We can't assume disparities are *automatically* caused by *discrimination*

“Any serious study of racial and ethnic groups, whether in a given society or in a wide variety of societies in countries around the world, repeatedly encounters the inescapable fact of large and numerous disparities among these groups... These differences cannot be dismissed as mere “perceptions” or “stereotypes,” nor can they be automatically attributed to some one given cause, such as genetics, as was often the primary cause cited in the twentieth century, or to the maltreatment by others, as was equally often cited in the late twentieth century. The sources of disparities are numerous and complex, and they must be confronted in their complexity, if we are seeking the truth, rather than trying to promote a vision or an agenda.” — Thomas Sowell<sup>19</sup>

**Example:** Bank Lending—In 2000. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights found that blacks are rejected twice as much as whites for home loans: 44.6 % for blacks vs. 22.3 % for whites. However, that same report found that white Americans are turned down nearly twice as much as Asians and Native Hawaiians for the exact same mortgages (22.3 % vs. 12.4 %). Moreover, in 1997 black-owned banks turned down black applicants for home mortgages at higher rates than did white owned banks. — Thomas Sowell (paraphrase).<sup>20</sup>

- We must be willing to consider both *external* and *internal* factors that cause disparities.

**Example:** Traffic Stops—a rise of black drivers pulled over does not *necessarily* indicate a rise in race-based discrimination. It *could* mean this, but it could also be reflective of a rise in crime rates in predominantly black communities or a rise of speeding among younger black drivers. A specific example of this occurred on the New Jersey Turnpike in 2001, during which time more black drivers than white drivers were pulled over. However the *Speed Violations of New Jersey Turnpike: Final Report* came out with an analysis of this phenomenon and found that “in the southern segment of the turnpike, where the speed limit is 65 mph, 2.7 percent of black drivers were speeders, compared with 1.4 percent of white drivers. Among drivers going faster than 90 m.p.h. the disparity was even greater... Demographic research has [also] shown that the black population is younger than the white population, and younger drivers are more likely to speed.”<sup>21</sup>

**Example:** Academic Achievement: — “In Australia... Chinese students spent more than twice as much time on their homework as white students did. How surprised should we be that Asian students in general tend to do better academically than white students in general, *in predominantly white societies* such as Australia, Britain, or the United States? The same pattern can be seen among whole nations, as such Asian countries as Japan, South Korea, and Singapore likewise show patterns of hard work by their students and academic results on international tests that place these countries above most Western nations.”— Thomas Sowell<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> *Intellectuals and Race*, 7

<sup>20</sup> *Discrimination and Disparities*, 88–89

<sup>21</sup> Sowell, *Discrimination and Disparities*, 95. “Different people with different priorities making different choices will experience different outcomes... The more fully committed we become to a vision of justice in which unequal outcomes are automatically assumed to be the result of injustice, the more our quest for justice will lead ... to the use of force to enforce sameness... If we don't bother to distinguish between inequalities that come from sin and those that don't, then we are well on our way not to a fictional dystopia but to repeating the bloodiest mistakes of modern history.” — Thaddeus Williams (*Confronting Injustice Without Compromising Truth*), 86–87.

<sup>22</sup> *Discrimination and Disparities*, 102–103 Sowell cites, Richard Lynn, *The Global Bell Curve: Race, IQ, and Inequality Worldwide* (2008), 51; James Bartholomew, *The Welfare of Nations* (2016), 104–106; PISA 2015: *Results in Focus* (2018), 5.

- We can't assume that *correlation* equals *causation*

“Correlation doesn't imply causation. Yet in many discussions in universities these days, the correlation of a demographic trait or identity group membership with an outcome gap is taken as evidence that discrimination (structural or individual) caused the outcome gap. Sometimes it [does], but sometimes it [doesn't], but if people can't raise alternative possible causal explanations without eliciting negative consequences, then the community is unlikely to arrive at an accurate understanding the problem. And without understanding the true nature of a problem, there is little chance of solving it.”— Jonathan Haidt and Greg Lukianoff<sup>23</sup>

**Example:** Academic Achievement— “Parental family structure and parental involvement were major explanatory factors and solutions with respect to the achievement gap...Research... found that gaps caused by family factors were often larger than those caused by race. There is an old adage among many family scientists that when a Caucasian comes from a single parent or a blended family structure, he or she loses the advantage of being white. It is still rather unusual for a white child to be born out of wedlock (a 28.2 percent chance), but it is common for an African American student to come from a single parent family (a 69.4 percent chance)... Perhaps most significantly, the meta-analysis revealed that, if an African American or Latino student was a person of faith and came from a two-biological-parent family, the achievement gap *totally disappeared*, even when adjusting for socioeconomic status.”<sup>24</sup>

- We must be willing accept whatever is *true*—*regardless of the source*.

“Read those you disagree with. Sometimes those you disagree with will have something very thoughtful to say. This will help you learn that your ideological opponent is not an enemy or a horrible person. Also, you must develop empathy as a political instinct. To get a hearing from the person you disagree with, it's important to understand as much as possible where they are coming from, and what in their past has shaped them. You will never be persuasive if you fail to demonstrate empathy.” — Andrew T. Walker<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> *The Coddling of the American Mind*, 231–232. “Correlation tests for a relationship between two variables. However, seeing two variables moving together does not necessarily mean we know whether one variable causes the other to occur.... It's possible to find a statistically significant and reliable correlation for two variables that are actually not causally linked at all. In fact, such correlations are common! Often, this is because both variables are associated with a different causal variable, which tends to co-occur with the data that we're measuring.” Correlation vs. Causation,” *Statistics Knowledge Portal* Online.

<sup>24</sup> William Jeynes, “Faith and Family Play a Bigger Role in Academic Achievement Than Race or Socioeconomic Status,” *The Public Discourse*, January 30, 2020. Glenn Loury comments on this balance, “The highly ideological character of racial debate in America makes nuance and complexity almost impossible to sustain. For while it may be true that the most debilitating impediments to advancement among the underclass derive from patterns of behavior that are self-limiting, it is also true that our history has dealt poor blacks a very bad hand. Yes, there must be change in these behaviors if progress is to be made. But a commitment of support will also be required from the broader society to help these folks help themselves.” “An American Tragedy: The legacy of slavery lingers in our cities' ghettos,” *The Brookings Institute*, March 1, 1998.

<sup>25</sup> “Advice to Young Christian Politicos,” *Andrew T. Walker* (blog), July 18, 2016.

## 5. The Authority of Scripture

- We must let *Scripture* be our ultimate guide and authority (2 Timothy 3:14–17)
- We must hold together Christian *values* and Christian *virtues*
- This gives us a *transcendent orientation* the world desperately needs.
- Interestingly enough: this is not a new thing for the church.

### Race Relations in the Early Church I Jews and Gentiles

- Deep and long history of *ethnic* and *political* hostility
- The Jews had been under Roman oppression for hundreds of years.
- Gentiles were nicknamed “dogs” by the Jewish people.
- How did they deal with this?

### The Hope of the Gospel I Homework: Study Ephesians 2:11–3:7

- For he is our peace, who made both groups one and tore down the dividing wall of hostility. — Ephesians 2:14
- He did this so that he might reconcile both to God in one body through the cross by which he put the hostility to death. — Ephesians 2:16
- For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. <sup>19</sup> So, then, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with the saints, and members of God’s household... — Ephesians 2:18–19

Here’s what Paul and the first century evangelists did *not* do. They did not play a game of grievances. First century Jews could have easily said, “Look at all the oppression the non-Jews have unleashed on us! We’ve been oppressed by Egyptians, Babylonians, Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, and now Romans. They banished us from Rome nearly two hundred years ago and tried again thirty years ago. Romans have invaded and now occupy Jerusalem, our most sacred city. Their economic system of mass taxation has left most of our fellow Jews languishing in poverty. The whole system is rigged against us by the Roman supremacists, enforcing their cultural hegemony on us at every turn. And we’re supposed to break bread with them and call them brothers? No way! They must prove their spiritual merit and solidarity with us by becoming ‘Judaized’ and divesting themselves of their Roman-ness.

Paul would have none of this. Paul does not say to the non-Jews, ‘Look at all the horrors your ancestors unleashed on the Jews.’ He does not say, ‘Jewish believers wake up to the fact that the gentiles have long oppressed you and that they are presently benefitting from all that injustice.’ Paul does not treat people like what Thomas Sowell calls ‘intertemporal abstractions’ of their ethnic identity groups, then pit one group against another in tribal warfare. That would be like rigging explosives to the foundations of the temple that is God’s church. And it would demolish the gospel itself, giving people a way of feeling justified and free of blame on the basis of ethnic identity in an oppressed group rather than on the finished work of Jesus. Paul cared far too much about the church and the gospel to split believers into such oppressor/oppressed binaries. — Thaddeus Williams<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> *Confronting Injustice Without Compromising Truth*, 47.



## Unity in Christ | Some Important Observations

- Jesus gave His life for our *salvation* and our *reconciliation*
- Racial Reconciliation in Christ motivated *justice* in the early church.
- Racial Unity is something we must pursue and fight for (Galatians 2; Ephesians 4:1–3)
- Racial Unity is rooted in a common *identity* ("in Christ")

We have to work with each other to find win-win solutions instead of relying on win-lose scenarios. I need to hear from whites about their concerns, and they need to listen to me about mine. Only then can we work toward mutually beneficial solutions to our racialized problems. Does research support this? Yes....under the right conditions, intergroup contact produces more tolerance and less prejudice...when we share an ***overarching identity*** with those we're in contact with, we begin to see them as part of our group. At that point, our biases are dramatically reduced." — George Yancey<sup>27</sup>

For those of you who were baptized into Christ have been clothed with Christ. <sup>28</sup> There is no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male and female; since you are all one in Christ Jesus. — Galatians 3:27–28

In Christ there is not Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all. — Colossians 3:11

From now on, then, we do not know anyone from a worldly perspective... Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!  
— 2 Corinthians 5:16a, 17

- This doesn't mean we don't have unique group-*differences* (i.e. white, black, male, female).
- It means we don't have an ultimate group-*identity* apart from Christ.
- Doesn't mean our differences are *erased*, it just means they're not *ultimate*
- Jesus is our new, ultimate, and unifying identity.

"In a world that took for granted the hierarchy of human chattels and their owners, he insisted that the distinctions between slave and free, now that Christ himself had suffered the death of a slave, were of no more account than those between Greek and Jew." — Tom Holland<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> "Not White Fragility—Mutual Responsibility,"

<sup>28</sup> *Dominion: How the Christian Revolution Remade the World*, 92.

## In the Church vs. In the Public Square

- Racial Unity and Justice *in the Church* is a *primary, whole church* Issue (Galatians 3:27–28; Colossians 2:11; Ephesians 2:11–3:7)
- Racial Unity & Justice *in the Public Square* is a *secondary, individual Christian* Issue (Romans 14; 1 Corinthians 8–9).
- The first is a *primary* issue based on Biblical *Doctrine*. The second is a *personal* issue based on *Individual Conscience*.<sup>29</sup>
- However we approach this issue: the Bible is—and must be—our ultimate authority.

*Justice, as a biblical category, is not synonymous with anything and everything we feel would be good for the world...When it comes for doing good in our communities and in the world, let's not turn every possibility into a responsibility and every opportunity into an ought. If we want to see our brothers and sisters do more for the poor and the afflicted, we'll go farther and be on safer ground if we use grace as our motivating principle instead of guilt." — Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert<sup>30</sup>*

"The quest for cosmic justice sounds like a noble one, but we have to ask ourselves the hard questions: How do we determine what opportunities should be equalized? What is the cost of trying to fix these imbalances? Who has the power or knowledge to do so competently and benevolently? It's one thing to see that some are advantaged more than others. It's another to insist that justice demands state-sponsored attempts to ensure that opportunities are equalized" — DeYoung and Gilbert (Ibid. 182).

## How Do You Know?

- Basic Questions: Gifting, Passion, Ability, etc.
- Vital Question: **Moral Proximity**<sup>31</sup>
  - The *closer the need*, the *greater the responsibility* to help.
  - What are the needs of my family?
  - What are the issues in my community?
  - What are the opportunities in my church?
  - How am I uniquely gifted / positioned to serve?

*If anyone has this world's goods and sees a fellow believer in need but withholds compassion from him—how does God's love reside in him? Little children, let us not love in word or speech, but in action and in truth. — 1 John 3:17–18*

**Passages to Study:** Luke 10:30–37; Romans 14; 2 Corinthians 8–9; Galatians 6:1–10

---

<sup>29</sup> For more on this discussion, see our Workshop "Disagreement without Division" at [www.stonegatefellowship.com](http://www.stonegatefellowship.com). See also the excellent books: Gavin Ortlund, *Finding the Right Hills to Die On* and Andrew Naselli and JD Crowley, *Conscience: What it is and How to Train It*.

<sup>30</sup> *What is the Mission of the Church?* 176–177,

<sup>31</sup> Gilbert and DeYoung, *What is the Mission of the Church?*, 183–186.

“Life in multiethnic church...is incubating me in humility, understanding, and a desire for justice. It’s teaching me to walk and think more carefully, to speak more circumspectly. It’s teaching me to love my enemy and look for the plank in my own eye. It’s teaching me a better politics...Inside the local church is where a Christian politics becomes complicated, authentic, credibly, not ideologically enslaved, real. It’s in these real-life situations where you’re forced to think about what righteousness truly is, what justice truly requires, what obligations you possess toward your fellow God-imagers, and what you yourself are made of...Christians learn politics, in particular, as we work for unity amid all the reasons we give one another not to be united. It’s in this battle for unity that we work for unity amid all the reasons we give one another not to be united. It’s in this battle for unity that we should find the first inflections and glimmers of the just and righteous order, one that should make the nations envy...

So every church is political. Every church is an embassy of heaven. But no church is competent to wield the sword. Therefore, churches should ordinarily not seek to influence government policy directly. Doing so, in effect, is a breach of the separation between church and state. It risks misidentifying Jesus’ name with human wisdom. It risks abusing the consciousness of church members. And it risks undermining Christian freedom and unity...In most instances trying to directly influence government policy involves you in more than just “putting on” [good] deeds. It involves you in competencies you don’t possess, and it says more about Jesus than you have the authority to say...When pastors or churches tie their names to a piece of government policy, legislation, or nomination, they effectively tie the name of Jesus to that endeavor...Non-Christians will begin to view that church as a lobbying wing of a party and Christians as political operatives for that party. Talk about undermining the gospel! “ — Jonathan Leeman<sup>32</sup>

“It’s our job as a congregation to live out the covenant we’ve taken before the Lord and to show that the Christ we share is more important than the politics we don’t...I pray that we as a congregation can actually see the gospel displayed as we love those who voted differently than us this past Tuesday. And part of that can mean some very difficult conversations directly with those with whom you have some pretty deep political differences. But part of loving them means being willing to hear them out and believe the best ... We will pray for goodness and justice and right to triumph, but we will harbor no illusions that if [either candidate] had been elected, then the Fall would have been reversed. In our politics, the victors and the vanquished live in a fallen world, even though they experience the fall differently. Pray that we learn well from listening to each other’s histories...and pray that God would give us wisdom in knowing how to best respond to those that we’re wondering if we should regard as our enemies.” — Mark Dever<sup>33</sup>

“Christians must be critical thinkers and question the assumptions and conclusions presented to us. We shouldn’t simply accept the issues as they’ve been framed by political parties, ideological tribes, or the media - because these sources usually aren’t analyzing the issues from the standard of the gospel.” — Justin Giboney (Ibid. 40)

“At certain times and on certain issues Christian principles compel us to defy both political conservatism and political progressivism. When it comes to political ideology, to be conservative or progressive at all times and on every issue is not only to be intellectually lazy and easily manipulated, but also it’s unfaithful.” — Justin Giboney (Ibid. 50)

“Some Christians are more willing to defend their ideological tribe than the Christian faith. It’s imperative that Christians are deliberate about avoiding partisan and ideological indoctrination. We also compromise our faith when we look to political tribes for validation simply because we want to belong. Our partisan and ideological affiliations should never become religious in nature.” — Justin Giboney (Ibid. 63).

---

<sup>32</sup> *How the Nations Rage*, 134, 135, 145, 149.

<sup>33</sup> “Neither a Republican nor a Democrat Church,” *9Marks*, November 14, 2016. Preached at Capital Hill Baptist Church the Sunday following the November 2016 Election.

## 6. A Modern Alternative I Critical Theory<sup>34</sup>

- Sees human relationships primarily through the lens of group identity (race, class, gender, etc.)
- Understands the world primarily in terms of power.
- Assumes that oppression is the default mode of all human relationships.
- Assigns a group identity based upon levels of privilege and oppression.
- The ultimate goal is liberation of oppressed groups.
- Social Justice is defined as the deconstructing of institutions of power and privilege and the elimination of disparities.

### Critical Race Theory (aka: CRT)

- Sees the world primarily through group identity and engagement (i.e. black and white)
- Traffics heavily in categories of privilege and oppression
- Identifies Anglo-Americans in category of privileged-*oppressors* and people of color (i.e. black/ brown) in the category of *oppressed*.

### CRT Gets Some Things Right

- Racism and Injustice were at work structurally in the past (i.e. Slavery, Jim Crow, Redlining, etc.)
- Racism and Injustice can be at work structurally today
- Racism is still alive and at work in human hearts.

### An Honest Question

- Is CRT a Biblically Faithful Option for Christians to Pursue Justice?
- No
- CRT operates from and applies a completely different *worldview* than Scripture.

“The problem is not with the quest for social justice. The problem is what happens when that quest is undertaken from a framework that is not compatible with the Bible. Today many Christians accept conclusions that are generated from [worldviews] that are wired with very different [assumptions] about reality than those we find in Scripture. We shirk God’s commands and hurt his image bearers when we unwittingly allow unbiblical worldview assumptions to shape our approach to justice.” — Thaddeus Williams<sup>35</sup>

- Consistently applied, CRT fosters bitterness, resentment, and partiality instead of love, unity, and justice.

Dear God, Please help me to *hate white people*. Or at least to *want to hate them*. At least, I want to *stop caring about them, individually and collectively*. I want to stop caring about their misguided, racist souls, to stop believing that they can be better, that they can stop being racist... Lord, if it be your will, *harden my heart*. Stop me from *striving to see the best in people*. Stop me from *being hopeful* that White people can and will do better... Stop me from seeing them as *members of the same body*. ” — Chanequa Walker-Barnes<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> We have written a lengthy position paper on Critical Theory and Critical Race Theory. This will be available on the website when the workshop is posted. For a good article summarizing the positions and critiques of Critical Theory, see Neil Shenvi and Pat Sawyer, “The Incompatibility of Critical Theory and Christianity” *The Gospel Coalition*, May 15, 2019.

<sup>35</sup> *Confronting Injustice Without Compromising Truth*,

<sup>36</sup> “Prayer of a Weary Black Woman.” in *A Rhythm of Prayer: A Collection of Meditations for Renewal*, edited by Sarah Bessey, 69, 72.

## One Example: The Black Lives Matter Organization

“We disrupt the Western-prescribed nuclear-family-structure requirement by supporting each other as extended families and ‘villages’ that collectively care for one another.”<sup>37</sup>

“We are trained Marxists...We are super-versed on, sort of, ideological theories. And I think that what we really tried to do is build a movement that could be utilized by many, many black folk.”<sup>38</sup>

- In fairness: many people use #BLM to mean Black Lives Matter **too**, not Black Lives Matter **more**.
- Still: it does little good to use the same *language* if we are operating with different *dictionaries*.
- A person’s *worldview* determines this (Romans 1:18–32; Colossians 2:8)
- This is why we stand behind the *statement*, but must reject the *organization*

“*Black Lives Matter has to be thought of in this way. We have to separate the affirmation or the statement from the organization and its mission. The statement “black lives matter,” the affirmation, I think is right and wise and needs to be said. Here’s what the church has to understand, is that we’ve always been most effective when we’ve been specific, intentional and particularized....When we say, “Hey all lives matter,” what we’re basically doing is diminishing the specificity to a group of people who need the affirmation. Why do blacks need the affirmation? It’s because we’re the only people who were ever brought to this country forcibly that were not seen as fully human. We’re the only people who had to fight for our humanity to be codified into official documents in this country. Then you have the 3/5ths compromise, that basically was a way of saying, “Okay, we’ll identify some of your humanity, but not all, and the only reason we’re doing this is for economic and political purposes.” If you remember the Civil Rights movement, one of the major iconic figures that comes out of that is an image of a man carrying kind of a walking billboard that says, “I am a man.” This quest for African Americans to justify their humanity is deeply rooted in the origins of our country and it’s continued on to current times. And so I think Black Lives Matter has done a good job in highlighting the particularity of needing to affirm that, but I also think what we need to be cautious to recognize they’re not just a racial justice movement. They also have many other things that we wouldn’t agree with as evangelicals, such as LGBT issues and transgender issues. They’re as much a promoter of transgenderism and homosexuality as they are of racial equality, so we need to be cautious about the organization while being very passionate about the affirmation.*” — Chris Brooks<sup>39</sup>

“The tone of many movements, but particularly the Black Lives Matter movement—the undertone is not necessarily hope. People are being mobilized out of frustration and anger, which is wildly different from the historic movement which was dream-driven and vision-driven. *I Have a Dream* was so powerful really because it was the dream of God, and the dream of God involves all people, not just black people. And that’s why it had the power to mobilize beyond the black community. [...] It was a dream for majority culture and minority culture.” — J.T. Thomas<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> Former Mission Statement of The Black Lives Matter Organization. See full statement at Patrive Onwuka, “Fact Check: Is it True that BLM Wants to Abolish the Nuclear Family?” October 1, 2020, *Independent Women’s Forum*.

<sup>38</sup> Yaron Steinbuch, “Black Lives Matter Co-Founder Describes Herself as ‘Trained Marxist,’” *New York Post*, June 25, 2020,

<sup>39</sup> “Race and the Church Part 2” *Think Biblically Podcast*, Online Transcript, Biola University, June 11, 2020.

<sup>40</sup> Derrick Bills, “Civil Righteousness: Interview with J.T. Thomas,” *Nations Media*, March 2021.

## Love + Discernment = Faithfulness

And I pray this: that your **love will keep on growing in knowledge and every kind of discernment**, so that you may approve the things that are superior and may be pure and blameless in the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God. — Philippians 1:9–11

### Some of You Might Be Thinking:

- “See, I knew racism wasn’t a big deal anymore.”
- “If I just ignore racism, it will eventually go away.”
- “We all just need to move on from this race conversation.”
- “I don’t have any work to do from here.”

**Our Response to this is:** *Absolutely Not.*

### 7. Don’t Get Distracted.

- A rejection of CRT (or any secular approach) is not an *excuse* to be apathetic in the cause for racial unity, reconciliation, and justice.
- There are still deep, deep *wounds* that still need to be addressed.
- Nobody should out-*love* Christ-followers on these issues.
- Because of Jesus, unity and reconciliation should be our *A-Game*.
- If you’re frustrated with the secular approach, then *quit complaining* and *show the world how it’s done*.

“I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you are also to love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” — John 13:34–35

For the love of Christ compels us, since we have reached this conclusion, that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all so that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for the one who died for them and was raised. From now on, then, we do not know anyone from a worldly perspective. Even if we have known Christ from a worldly perspective, yet now we no longer know him in this way. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come! Everything is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation. That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and he has committed the message of reconciliation to us. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us. We plead on Christ’s behalf, “Be reconciled to God. — 2 Corinthians 5:14–20.

All [secular models] focus on a single explanation for why racism is a problem in our society....Each of [them] identifies one source of racial conflict and proposes solution to deal with that source....Their weakness lies in their refusal to identify other sources of the problem. At best, these incomplete models can help us correct certain aspects of racial tension, but they will never eradicate the problem....If racial conflict has a spiritual foundation, then secular models are unable to identify the true source of the conflict...Racism is a spiritual and moral problem. Only if we see how our sin nature is the primary source for all other sources of racial tension will we be able to stop treating symptoms and tear this disease out by its awful roots.— George Yancey<sup>41</sup>

The lack of safe spaces to discuss racial issues in the secular world means that Christians should work harder to create safe places in our churches. People will be able to explore genuine answers instead of parroting secular models. Honest dialogue in a Christian setting is vital since our faith teaches us the role of human depravity in the development of racism. We will understand not only that people of other races may be insensitive to our perspective on racial issues, but that we may be insensitive to their perspective as well. When we humbly realize the implications of human depravity, we can work toward creating safe spaces necessary for racial healing...In the creation of safe spaces we can rid ourselves of the fears that drive racial mistrust. In safe spaces majority and minority group members can take the potentially costly chances necessary to deal with racial alienation. Majority group members can overcome their fears that racial minorities will take advantage of their repentance. Minorities can overcome their fears that majority group members will dismiss racial concerns once minorities have extended forgiveness. — George Yancey<sup>42</sup>

## C. Some Practical Steps Forward

1. Study— Read Widely (see footnotes & recommended resources)
2. Have Conversations (in person; not online)
3. Build Relationships
4. Be Committed
5. Take the Initiative

---

<sup>41</sup> *Beyond Racial Gridlock*, 78–79. Yancey specifically critiques four secular models: the colorblindness model, the Anglo-conformity model, the multiculturalism model, and the white responsibility model.

<sup>42</sup> *Beyond Racial Gridlock*, 132.

## Gospel Unity I Elvie Brown

### Genesis 11:1–9

Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. **2** And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. **3** And they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly.” And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. **4** Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.” **5** And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. **6** And the Lord said, “Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. **7** Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech.” **8** So the Lord dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. **9** Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth. And from there the Lord dispersed them over the face of all the earth.

### Matthew 22:34–40

But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. **35** And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. **36** “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” **37** And he said to him, “**You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38 This is the great and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40 On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.**”



### **Ephesians 3:1–6**

For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles— **2** assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you, **3** how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. **4** When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, **5** which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. **6** This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

### **Galatians 2:11–14**

But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. **12** For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. **13** And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. **14** But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

## Hebrews 12:25–29

**25** See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven. **26** At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.” **27** This phrase, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. **28** Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, **29** for our God is a consuming fire.

## 1 Peter 4:17

For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

## James 2:1–13

My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. **2** For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, **3** and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, “You sit here in a good place,” while you say to the poor man, “You stand over there,” or, “Sit down at my feet,” **4** have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? **5** Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him? **6** But you have dishonored the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court? **7** Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honorable name by which you were called?

**8** If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well. **9** But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. **10** For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it. **11** For he who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. **12** So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. **13** For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

**Partiality:** an unfair tendency to treat one person, group, or thing better than another (Merriam-Webster)



## Resources

In our research and study over the past few years, we've found these books to be very helpful in providing a robust, balanced view of the various issues at work in this very complex conversation. These works are written by individuals who we agree with on certain issues, but disagree with on others. Please do not take these recommendations as blanket endorsements for everything these authors write. Instead, think critically, measure biblically, and process in community. We actually hope these resources will be a good first (or next) step for you in your journey to honor God on this important issue.

### Race and Justice in the Bible

- *Generous Justice* by Timothy Keller
- *From Every Tribe and Nation* by J. Daniel Hayes
- Children's Book: *God's Very Good Idea* by Trilia Newbell
- Children's Book: *God Made Me and You* by Shai Linne

### Gospel Unity in the Church

- *Beyond Racial Gridlock* by George Yancey
- *Bloodlines* by John Piper

### Justice and the Mission of the Church

- *What is the Mission of the Church?* by Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert
- *Let Justice Roll Down* by John Perkins (part personal memoir; part gospel exhortation)
- *Reading While Black* by Esau McCaulley
- *When Helping Hurts* by Brian Fikkert and Steve Corbett
- *Unimaginable* by Jeremiah Johnson

### Historical Perspectives on Race and the Church

- *The Color of Compromise* by Jemar Tisby
- *Black Rednecks and White Liberals* by Thomas Sowell
- *The Warmth of Other Suns* by Isabel Wilkerson
- *America's Religious History* by Thomas Kidd.
- *The Civil War as Theological Crisis* by Mark Noll
- "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" by Martin Luther King Jr.

### Critical Race Theory: Understanding and Criticism

- Neil Shenvi's Website: [www.shenviapologetics.com](http://www.shenviapologetics.com)
- *Confronting Injustice Without Compromising Truth* by Thaddeus Williams
- *Why Social Justice is Not Biblical Justice* by Scott David Allen
- *Cynical Theories* by James Lindsey and Helen Pluckrose
- *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction* by Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic

### Culture, Sociology, Economics, and Law

- *Under Our Skin* by Benjamin Watson
- *Divided by Faith* by Michael Emerson and Christian Smith
- *Discrimination and Disparities* by Thomas Sowell
- *Intellectuals and Race* by Thomas Sowell
- *The Color of Law* by Richard Rothstein
- *The War on Cops* by Heather MacDonald

### Civic Engagement, Politics, and Personal Witness

- *Compassion AND Conviction* by Justin Giboney
- *How the Nations Rage* by Jonathan Leeman
- *Winsome Conviction* by Tim Muehlhoff and Rick Langer
- *Thou Shall Not be a Jerk* by Eugene Cho